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ABSTRACT

In order to determine the validity of using the Cooperative English Test (CET) for placement in remedial writing, Queensborough Community College initiated a study using the Holistic Reading Method to rate essays written by a random sample of 204 incoming freshman in fall 1973. Three regular English and three remedial English instructors were trained to serve as a judging panel under the direction of a "Chief Reader". "Range finder" essays were ranked using 47 randomly chosen papers. These rankings were verified by the panel and were then used as reference criteria for judging other essays. Correlations were then established (1) between holistic essay scores, judges, and CET scores; (2) between placement ratings, judges, and CET scores; and (3) on the percentage of agreement between judges, holistic methods, and the 20 cases of tied placement. A significant relationship was found between holistic scores and the CET and between all methods of placement including holistic, CET, and panel judgments. There was a significant difference between holistic scores of students placed by CET scores into regular and remedial English. All findings supported the continued use of the CET for placement. Frequency tables are appended. (RT)

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THE VALIDITY OF THE QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROCEDURE PLACING STUDENTS IN A REMEDIAL WRITING COURSE (BE-01)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgments	iii
List of Tables	VI
Purpose & Objectives of the Study	2
The Research Design	2
The Sample	4
The Cooperative English Test	6
Queensborough Community College Placement Rules	7
Reliability of Selected Cooperative English Test Subtests	8
Validity of Selected Cooperative English Test Subtests	8
Administration and Scoring of the Cooperative English Test	8
The Panel of Reader/Judges	9
The Essay	11
Scoring the Essay Using the Holistic Reading Method	12
Reliability and Validity of Holistic Reading Method	16
Scoring the Essay By Placing Student Into EN-11 or BE-01	17
Limitations of the Study	18
Statistical Analyses and Results	18
The Relationship Among the Reader/Judges Using Holistic Scores and Placement Decisions	19
The Relationship between the Holistic Score on the Essay and the Scores on the Expression and Vocabulary Subtests of the Cooperative English Tests	22
The Relationship Between the Placements Given by the Panel Using the Holistic Reading Method and the Cooperative English Tests	24

Page

The Relationship Between HRM Scores of Students Placed in EN-11 and BE-01..... 31

Summary of Results..... 31

Discussion..... 32

Future Studies..... 33

References..... 35

Appendix A: Essay Instructions for Students..... 36

Appendix B: Pairwise Comparisons Among Reader/Judges Showing Frequencies and Percents of Placements and Percent of Agreement in Placements..... 37

Appendix C: Pairwise Comparisons of Placements Among Reader/Judges and the Cooperative English Test (N=203) Showing Frequency, Percents and Percent of Agreement..... 41

Appendix D: QCC Catalog (1973-1974) Description of BE-01 and English 11..... 44

Appendix E: Research Objectives of the Office of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Research to Evaluate Remedial Instruction at QCC..... 45

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	The Total Number, the Percentage and the Number in Sample from Each Curriculum of the Matriculated Freshman of QCC in Fall, 1972	5
2	The Panel of Reader/Judges: Background Number of Years of Professional Employment in Writing Field	10
3	The Intercorrelations between the Holistic Scores on the Essay Given by the Six Reader/Judges	21
4	The Percentage of Agreement in Placements Given by the Six Reader/Judges (See Appendix B for frequency tables)	21
5	The Correlation between the Holistic Scores and the Expression and Vocabulary Subtests of the Cooperative English Test (N=203)	23
6	The Percentage of Agreement between the Placements Given by the Six Reader/Judges and the Placements Given by the Cooperative English Test (N=203)	26
7	Correlations between the Placements Made by Panel, Holistic Reading Method and the Cooperative English Test for the Three Cases	28
8	Percentage of Agreement between Panel, Holistic Reading Method and Cooperative English Tests for the Three Cases	29
9	A Comparison between the Holistic Scores for Students Placed in BE-01 and EN-11	30

Under the program of Open Admissions at the City University of New York (CUNY), all graduates of New York City high schools, without regard to high school average, are guaranteed entrance to a CUNY college. Long before the advent of Open Admission, Queensborough Community College (QCC) required its incoming freshman to take a battery of placement tests in English and Mathematics. As stated in the Queensborough Community College Catalog (1973-1974) these tests were administered "in order to enable the College to guide the student into the level of coursework most appropriate to his needs...(p. 26)" The results of these placement tests determine whether students require remedial courses in English and/or Mathematics. Many regular courses in Biology, English, History and Social Science are not open to students until they complete required remedial courses in English (Academic Advisement Handbook, 1973), hence, the importance of validly screening freshmen.

The major thrust of this study was to determine whether the QCC procedure using the Cooperative English Test (CET) correctly identifies students who need a remedial writing course (BE-01) conducted by the Basic Educational Skills Department (BES). The BES Department at QCC provides college preparatory courses in reading, study skills and composition (See Appendix E for other research objectives of the Office of Testing concerned with the evaluation of remedial instruction).

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study was designed to determine the criterion-related validity of the English composition placement test procedures used at QCC. That is, does the English composition placement test system using the CET significantly differentiate between the students who require remedial writing and those who do not? Specifically, this study considered the following three objectives:

1. To determine whether there is a significant relationship between the scores obtained on the essay scored by a panel of experts and the Expression and Vocabulary scores of the CET.
2. To determine whether the distribution of students placed into remedial writing (BE-01) by the routine CET composition placement test procedures at QCC is significantly different from the distribution of students placed into BE-01 by a panel of writing experts after scoring essays specially written by students for this study.
3. To determine whether there is a significant difference between the essay scores using the Holistic Reading Method (HRM) for students placed into either EN-11 or BE-01 by placement procedures using the CET.

The Research Design

In order to determine the validity of the QCC procedure for placing students in a remedial writing course (BE-01), six writing teachers from the College, three from the English Department and three

from the Basic Educational Skills Department, volunteered to serve on a panel of reader/judges to score specially written essays by a sample of entering matriculated freshmen. These essays served as a criterion variable for the present study. It was important to have reader/judges from both departments serve on the panel since the cutoff scores used for the placement procedures were determined by a committee comprised of members from both departments and since the frame of reference used to judge a student's writing skills may be affected by systematic classroom teaching experiences. Basic Skills teachers are in contact for the most part with students categorized as deficient in writing skills, while English teachers are in contact for the most part with students who either passed the CET or were required to take remedial reading (BE-03) as a corequisite with EN-11. A "chief reader" served as a coordinator for the six reader/judges and trained them to use the Holistic Reading Method (HRM) which is later discussed in greater detail. The investigators, on the recommendation of the "chief-reader" adopted the Holistic Reading Method (HRM) for scoring student essays because of the general unreliability of non-systemized scoring of essays.

A comparison was made between the holistic essay scores (HRM) given by each reader/judge who served on the panel of reader/judges and the scores on the Expression and Vocabulary subtests of the CET. This comparison yields correlations which measured the relationship between the two CET subtest scores and the essay scores given by the panel of reader/judges. (See objective one). Each reader/judge was also requested to judge each essay for placement into the credit

writing course (EN-11) or the non-credit remedial writing course (BE-01). The phi correlation was utilized to determine whether the placements by the reader/judges were similar to the placements made by the CET placement procedure. (See objective two). The essays were divided into EN-11 or BE-01 based upon the procedure using the CET. A statistical test was performed to determine if the holistic reading scores for these two groups were significantly different, or if the CET placement procedures do significantly differentiate between those needing remediation and those who do not. (See objective three)

The Sample

The population being considered in this study were 3347 matriculated students, both day and evening, who entered QCC in the Fall of 1973. All students were routinely administered the CET prior to registration to determine whether they required remedial courses in English and/or Mathematics. A random sample (N=204) stratified by curriculum (See Table 1), was selected from the 3347 entering freshmen. These students were divided among the following curricula: Liberal Arts, Pre-Engineering, Business Administration (Business Transfer), Business Careers, Electrical Technology, Mechanical Technology, Design Drafting, Medical Laboratory Technology, and Nursing. Table 1 reports the percentage of students enrolled in each curriculum as of fall, 1972. The fall, 1972 enrollment served as a base for generating the stratified random sample of fall '73 freshmen in this study. This procedure helped to insure that the sample (N=204) was representative of the total freshmen population at QCC, so that the results of the present study could be generalized to the population of matriculated freshmen.

TABLE 1

The Total Number, the Percentage and the Number in Sample from Each Curriculum of the Matriculated Freshman of QCC in Fall, 1972

Curriculum	Day Fall'72	Evening Fall'72	Total Fall'72	% of Total	No. in Study Fall'73 Entrants
Liberal Arts*	1743	71	1814	52.1	99 (48.5)
Pre-Engineering*	63	4	67	1.9	12 (5.9)
Business Transfers*	183	16	199	5.7	12 (5.9)
Business Careers**	513	30	543	15.6	26 (12.7)
Electrical Technology**	261	7	268	7.7	15 (7.4)
Mechanical Technology**	68	0	68	2.0	0 (0.0)
Design Drafting**	82	1	83	2.4	1 (0.5)
Medical Laboratory Technology**	125	2	127	3.6	15 (7.4)
Nursing**	314	1	315	9.0	24 (11.8)
Total Transfer Curricula *	1989	91	2080	59.7	123 (60.3)
Total Career Curricula **	1363	41	1404	40.3	81 (39.7)
Total	3352	132	3484	100.0	204 (100.0)

* Programs Requiring Transfer to 4 year Institutions after 2 years at QCC.

** Two-year Career Programs completed at QCC

The Cooperative English Test

The CET, (Form 1A) is composed of two parts: Part I, Reading Comprehension, measuring reading ability, is a combination of two subtests, Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension; Part II, Expression, measuring writing ability, is a combination of two subtests, Effectiveness and Mechanics. Based upon the results of two subtests of the CET (Expression and Vocabulary), the students were placed either into English Composition (EN-11), a credit bearing writing course, or in Composition Workshop (BE-01), a non-credit remedial writing course. Since the usual QCC placement procedure for determining whether students require remedial reading is based on the data from the Vocabulary subtest in Part I and all of Part II, these were the scores utilized in this study.

The items used to measure Expression and Vocabulary are straightforward multiple choice type items with one best answer and three content distractors. The Effectiveness subtest of Expression (Part II) requires the students to select a written expression which most suitably completes the sentence (30 items).

The Mechanics subtest of Expression (Part II) requires the students to identify the line in a three-line sentence which contains a mechanical error (usage, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization) or no error (60 items). The items on the Mechanics subtest were "developed to simulate the 'real' writing situation in which a student goes over his own or another's writing to find errors." (Manual for Interpreting Scores: Cooperative English Tests, 1960). Thus, the

total score for Expression is the sum of correctly answered items from Effectiveness and Mechanics. The Vocabulary subtest (60 items) requires the student to define a word by selecting the best meaning from among four definitions. For all subtests, a score of one is given for a correct response, and a score of zero is given for an incorrect response.

Queensborough Community College Placement Rules

In the QCC placement system to determine whether a student requires remedial writing (BE-01) a converted Expression score of 148 (Percentile: 22.0) or above, places a student in the regular English composition course (EN-11) and a converted Expression score of 143 (Percentile: 7.9) or below places student in remedial writing (BE-01). These converted scores were generated to more easily interpret subtest scores and are derived from raw scores using a table found in the technical manual (Technical Report, Cooperative English Test, 1960). The converted Vocabulary score is checked when a converted Expression score is between 144-147: With these borderline scores (144-147 in Expression), a score at or below 151 (Percentile: 18.8) in Vocabulary places the student in BE-01, while a score at or above 152 (Percentile: 24.9) places the student in EN-11 (Technical Report: Cooperative English Test, 1960). The percentiles used are based on norms developed by ETS from a sample of college freshmen. The QCC placement rules and cut-off scores, developed jointly by the QCC departments of English and Basic Educational Skills, are embodied in a computer program so that student

placements into BE-01 or EN-11 are made automatically. These placement standards were utilized because both departments agreed that with scores below the selected cutoffs a student's chance for academic success at QCC would be seriously jeopardized.

Reliability of Selected Cooperative English Test Subtests

The alternate-form correlations resulting from administration of a pair of forms to the same students over a period of no more than one week were .88 and .84 for the Vocabulary and Expression subtests respectively. There is a need to conduct test-retest procedures to determine the reliability of the subtests for QCC students. (Technical Report, 1960)

Validity of Selected Cooperative English Test Subtests

Are the Expression and Vocabulary subtests truly measuring writing ability? All of the validity studies presented in the technical manual were done on earlier forms of the test and hence cannot be generalized to the test currently being used (Form 1A). In spite of the above deficiency, both reviewers in Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook (Buros, 1965) have, with reservations, recommended the test. However, it is important for QCC to determine the construct and predictive validity of the subtests.

Administration and Scoring of the Cooperative English Test

The CET was administered from April 30, 1973 to May 7, 1973, to all incoming matriculated freshmen by proctors from the QCC Office of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Research as part of a routine placement test procedure.

Scoring of answer sheets and placing of students in courses was performed in the QCC Data Processing Center. The answer sheets were scored by an Optical Mark Reader, (IBM 1230) and the placements were done on the QCC 360/30 IBM computer using a computer program specially prepared by the QCC Data Processing Center to follow standardized placement rules.

The Panel of Reader/Judges

The panel was comprised of six reader/judges drawn from the faculty of the QCC English Department and Basic Educational Skills Department. Faculty volunteers served on the panel. A seventh faculty person, a member of the Basic Educational Skills Department and an expert in the Holistic Reading Method (HRM) served in the role of Chief Reader for the training sessions. In the HRM as develcped at Educational Testing Service, the Chief Reader pre-scores the "range-finders" and conducts the training sessions for the HRM Sessions, but does not score any of the "live" essays used in this study except for the case of discrepant raters.

In a criterion-related validity study, the quality of the criterion variable is crucial. A description of the background and expertise of the panel members is therefore necessary. Inspection of Table 2 reveals that the average number of years spent in the writing field for the six panel members (teaching and non-teaching) is 8.5 (SD=6.1) while the mean for teaching writing is 6.0 (SD=2.7). Only one of the six panel members who scored the tests holds a Ph.D.

TABLE 2

The Panel of Reader/Judges: Background

Number of Years of Professional Employment in Writing Field

Judge	Sex	Dept. at QCC	Rank at QCC	Degrees & Majors	No. of Years Teaching Writing	No. of Years in Writing Field other than Teaching	Total No. of Years in Writing Field
1	F	Basic Educ. Skills	Asst. Prof.	B.A.-English Ed. M.A.-English Lit.	6	0	6
2	F	Basic Educ. Skills	Inst.	B.A.-English M.A.-Education	4.5	0	4.5
3	F	Basic Educ. Skills	Inst.	B.A.-English Lit. M.A.-English Lit.	8.5	0	8.5
4	F	Eng.	Asst. Prof.	B.A.-English Lit. M.A.-English Lit.	10	10	20
5	F	Eng.	Asst. Prof.	B.A.-English M.A.-English Ph.D.-English	4	5	9
6	M	Eng.	Inst.	B.A.-English M.A.-English	3	0	3
*Leader	F	Basic Educ. Skills	Assoc. Prof.	B.A.-English Lit. M.A.-Education Ph.D.-Higher Education	8	0	8
$\bar{X}$	--	--	--	--	(6.2) 6.0 **	(2.1) 2.5 **	(8.4) 8.5**
S.D.	--	--	--	--	(2.6) 2.7 **	(3.9) 4.2 **	(5.6) 6.1**

* The Chief Reader did not score "live" essays except in the case of discrepant raters.

** Means and standard deviations in parentheses include the Chief Reader.

in English while four members hold Masters degrees in English. One member received her MA in Education. The Chief Reader holds a doctorate in Higher Education. With regard to sex, five of the six panel members were females.

The Essay

During the week of Academic Advisement (June 1-7, 1973), a stratified sample of 251 students was required to write an expository essay for purposes of this study. From the group of 251 essays, 47 were randomly removed by the Chief Reader . These 47 papers were then used as "range-finders" for the holistic reading system. The remaining 204 essays comprised the set of "live" papers to be scored by the panel of reader/judges. So that extraneous variables would be minimized, each essay was numbered, and no name or other description of the student appeared on the essay.

Instructions for the essay, including the essay topic, had been prepared by the panel of judges and the Chief Reader during a meeting ten days before the administration of the essay. After considerable discussion, the panel decided upon the following criteria for developing a topic: the topic should be expository because much expository writing is required of students at the College; the topic should not require specialized knowledge in any one field; and the topic should be one that the students could relate to from their own experience. The panel then selected the topic, "Is New York City A Dying City?" The panel set the time limit at 50 minutes and did not require a given length. (See Appendix A for Placement Essay Instructions to the Student).

Scoring the Essay Using the Holistic Reading Method

All student essays were scored according to the HRM, developed at ETS for scoring the student writing sample on the English Composition Test of the College Entrance Examination Board. (Godshalk,1966) The essays were given rank scores of one to four.

The HRM calls for specific procedures designed to maximize reliability of the scoring method. A holistic reading of an essay requires the reader to read for an over-all impression, not for an error-count. The underlying principle here is that writing skill is not a trait that can be defined by a series of discrete items, but is rather a unified trait. That is, a totality of factors makes a single impression on the reader. For a reader to read holistically, he or she must read quickly, must not re-read, and must not analyze separate points of writing skill. Also, the reader must look for the promise of writing skill, rather than for accomplished writing skill per se, since few students can be expected to write polished prose in a 50-minute-test situation. Furthermore, in holistic evaluation, essays are not judged on the basis of an outside ideal of writing performance but rather on the range of performance of the given group of students on the given topic at that time. Thus, the range of scores reflects the performance of a specifically defined population rather than of an abstract population. It must be emphasized that rank scores of one to four represent ordinal data which may attenuate the results of the parametric analyses used in this study.

For the purpose of this study, these HRM procedures were followed:

1. A few days before the Holistic Reading Sessions, the Chief Reader experienced in the Holistic Reading Method, drew a random sample of 47 essays from the group of 251 essays. The Chief Reader then holistically scored (and re-scored to check her own reliability) the 47 essays, ranking them from one to four, with four as the best score.
2. These essays then constituted the "range-finders" which were used for reader/judge orientation and training at the Holistic Reading Sessions. For this purpose, all "range-finders" were photocopied so that each reader/judge could have a set of "range-finders".
3. The Holistic Reading Sessions, led by the Chief Reader and attended at all times by all six reader/judges, were held for two days in a room specially set up for that purpose. On the first day a long orientation period was held during which time the reader/judges were trained by the Chief Reader using the following procedures:
   a) First, a full explanation of the principle of holistic reading was given and discussed. Emphasis was on the need to read for a single impression and the need to judge the essays not on an outside ideal but on the range by the 47 "range-finder" essays in the sample on

the selected topic for the essay.

b) Next, the scoring of one to four was explained, and reference was made to the normal curve that the expectation, on the whole, was that there would be fewer extreme scores (1's and 4's) than middle scores (2's and 3's).

c) After this, a small group of "range-finders," was selected for their representativeness of the range, without reference to the scores given them by the Chief Reader. The reader/judges were asked to read the "range-finders" holistically and rank order them. No discussion of the separate writing characteristics of each paper was allowed, but a vote was taken to determine the group opinion of each "range-finder." The Chief Reader then announced her score. It was up to each reader to see how she or he concurred with the group opinion and with the opinion of the Chief Reader. More "range-finders" were then distributed until the Chief Reader felt that the group converged sufficiently in its judgments of papers. The scores given each "range-finder" by the Chief Reader were not absolutely firm in that if a substantial number of reader/judges disagreed with the Chief Reader's ranking of a particular essay, the essay was considered to be either of the new rank or a "maverick," or split

decision, paper. Such "mavericks" are expected in any reading, and part of the training of the reader/judges is geared toward this expectation.

4. "Live" essays were then distributed to the reader/judges. No "live" papers were photocopied; only originals were used. Each essay was read completely independently by each reader/judge so that six scores were given to each paper. At no time during the reading of "live" essays, did any reader/judge know what score another reader/judge had given a particular essay. This was accomplished by the use of a numbered set of 3 x 5 cards for each of the six reader/judges. As the cards were submitted, they were sorted by student aides and given to the Chief Reader. If the Chief Reader found divergence of more than one rank on a given paper, she served in the Holistic Reading Method role of "Table Leader" by asking those reader/judges who disagreed widely to re-read the essay, after re-reading some of their "range-finders."

5. Throughout the two days of the holistic reading sessions, the reader/judges, were required by the Chief Reader to take frequent breaks as a group. Since fatigue is a serious factor when controlling reader reliability, breaks were called at least every twenty-minutes, even if the reader/judges seemed to be working well. After each break another

"range finder" was distributed, read holistically by the entire group, scored, and voted on. In this way, all reader/judges were constantly reminded of the range for the given essay, and if a reader/judge found that her or his judgments were diverging from the group, she or he could bring his rankings in line with the group.

Therefore, each paper was read six times, and each reader/judge gave the paper a score ranging from one to four. When these scores were summed, each paper received three additional scores: a) the sum of the ranks given by the three members of the Basic Educational Skills Department, b) the sum of the ranks given by the three members of the English Department, and c) the sum of the ranks given by the total panel.

Reliability and Validity of Holistic Reading Method

Godshalk (1966) reported the reliability of holistic reading of essays to be .91. Score reliability, an estimate of the correlation to be expected if the students were to write five or more essays on five new topics and if these essays were read by 25 new readers was reported to be .84. Validity coefficients based on one reading of each essay ranged from .337 to .454 while four readings of each essay yielded coefficients from .542 to .640 (Godshalk, 1966)

It must be emphasized that essays scores generated from the HRM were by design not necessarily completely independent judgments by each of the reader/judges. Since the holistic system of scoring an essay forces the reader/judge to approximate the normal curve even when the

distribution of scores on the essay may not be normal, as is the case with the QCC student population, the reliability and validity of the holistic scores may be attenuated.

Scoring the Essay By Placing Student Into EN-11 or BE-01

Each reader was also told to place the student based on the overall quality of the essay into either of two courses offered at QCC: regular English Composition (EN-11), or Composition Workshop (BE-01), the remedial writing course. This placement was given independently from the rank given to the essay by the HRM. For group scores, if at least two of the three faculty members of the Basic Educational Skills Department indicated the placement as BE-01, then the placement was BE-01; if at least two of the three opted for EN-11, then the student was placed in EN-11. The same rules held for the English faculty department. For the complete panel, a tally of four out of six was necessary in this investigation for the placement of the student in either EN-11 or BE-01. There were 20 students (9.8% of the sample) who had three judges indicating EN-11 and three indicating BE-01. Since the objective of this study was to investigate the similarity of the placements made by the CET and by writing experts, the following three cases were investigated: (1) Case One: the 20 ties were removed from the analysis; (2) Case Two: the 20 ties were placed in BE-01 and (3) Case Three: the 20 ties were placed in EN-11.

Thus, each member of the panel was asked to provide the Office of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Research with two scores: (1) a rank ranging from one to four based on the Holistic Reading Method

and (2) a placement in either BE-01 or EN-11.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study can be generalized only to QCC freshmen. In addition, only QCC faculty members served on the panel. Whether these writing teachers are truly expert has only been determined by their academic background and experiences. (See Table 2 for more detail about panel members). A second panel of QCC faculty members with more experience and a panel composed of writing teachers from another institution would help to increase the confidence one places upon the conclusions arrived at in this study.

Statistical Analyses and Results

The major problem of this study was to find out if the QCC placement procedures using the CET Vocabulary and Expression subtests were different from the placements made by a group of reader/judges. In order to be able to answer this question, the following relationships were investigated:

1. the relationship among the reader/judges using holistic scores on the essay; (See Table 3)
2. the relationship between the holistic scores given to the essay by the panel of reader/judges and the scores on the CET, Expression and Vocabulary subtests; (See Objective 1)
3. the relationship of placements in BE-01 and EN-11 given by both the reader/judges using the holistic method and the CET. (See Objective 2)

4. The relationship between holistic scores by those students placed in EN-11 and BE-01. (See Objective 3)

The Relationship Among the Reader/Judges Using Holistic Scores and Placement Decisions

Each reader/judge was asked to indicate the rank for each essay as well as provide a placement in either EN-11 or BE-01 for each essay. Intercorrelations were statistically significant among the judges when the Holistic Reading Method was used to rank the essays. By inspecting the correlation matrix in Table 3 it seems that the reader/judges were in significant agreement with regard to the scores given to the essay, with Judge 6 showing the least amount of agreement (mean intercorrelation = .56), and Judge 5 showing the most amount of agreement (mean intercorrelation = .65). All intercorrelations among judges were significant at the .05 level, ranging from .52 to .68.

Table 4 shows the percentage of agreement among the reader/judges when placement in remedial writing (BE-01) or regular English (EN-11) was considered. The sum of the number of students placed into EN-11 by both procedures was added to the number of students placed into BE-01 by both procedures; and this total was divided by the total number in the sample (N=204), and multiplied by 100 to yield a percent value.

By inspecting Table 4, it seems there is more agreement on the average among the three English Department judges ($\bar{x}$ = 78.8) than among the three BES judges ($\bar{X}$ = 68.9). The agreement between the two

departments ($\bar{X}$ = 74.6) was greater than agreement within the BES Department by itself and less than the English Department. If the fifteen pairwise comparisons among the judges is considered the percent of agreement in placement ranges from 65.2% to 81.8% with a mean of 73.5% (See Appendix B).

TABLE 3

The Intercorrelations between the Holistic Scores on the Essay Given by the Six Reader/Judges

The Judges		1 (BES)	2 (BES)	3 (BES)	4 (ENG)	5 (ENG)	6 (ENG)
1	BES		.61*	.60*	.64*	.66*	.61*
2	BES			.66*	.61*	.68*	.57*
3	BES				.66*	.67*	.52*
4	English					.68*	.52*
5	English						.57*
6	English						

* $p < .05$

TABLE 4

The Percentage of Agreement in Placements Given by the Six Reader/Judges (See Appendix B for frequency tables)

The Reader/Judges		1 (BES)	2 (BES)	3 (BES)	4 (ENG)	5 (ENG)	6 (ENG)
1	BES		65.2	71.6	73.5	80.4	72.0
2	BES			70.1	73.0	77.9	78.4
3	BES				70.6	76.5	69.1
4	English					78.5	76.0
5	English						81.8
6	English						

The Relationship between the Holistic Score on the Essay and the Scores on the Expression and Vocabulary Subtests of the Cooperative English Tests (See Objective 1)

Table 5 shows that statistical significance was reached between the Holistic Scores assigned by the judges and the Expression and Vocabulary scores of the CET for five of the six judges. Statistically significant correlations using summative scores were also found for the three panel members from the BES Department as a group, for the three panel members from the English Department, and for the total panel.

TABLE 5

The Correlation Between the Holistic Scores and the Expression and Vocabulary Subtests of the Cooperative English Tests

(N=203)

Reader/Judges	Correlation between "Expression" and the Holistic Score	Correlation between "Vocabulary" and the Holistic Score
1 BES	.49*	.47*
2 BES	.53*	.41*
3 BES	.47*	.46*
4 English	.47*	.46*
5 English	.49*	.42*
6 English	-.03	.07
Reader/Judges (BES)	.59*	.40*
Reader/Judges (ENG)	.55*	.42*
Total Panel	.50*	.48*

* $p < .05$

The Relationship Between the Placements Given by the Panel Using the Holistic Reading Method and the Cooperative English Tests (See Objective 2)

Consensus for the panel of reader/judges was operationally defined to occur when four of the six members of the panel placed a student in either BE-01 or EN-11.

A phi coefficient was computed to determine whether the relationship between the placements by the panel, by the CET and by the HRM were significant. The data from the placements made by the panel revealed that there were 20 ties among the 203 essays (9.9%) when three reader/judges placed the student in BE-01 and the three other reader/judges placed the student in EN-11. The ties were treated in three different ways.

In case 1, the 20 ties representing the unreliability and the possible invalidity of the scoring system, were removed from the data. The major objective in establishing a panel of six writing teachers to judge the essays was to create a valid criterion because as stated previously, the scoring of essays by one teacher may be generally unreliable and invalid. Therefore, the ties were removed when the phi coefficient was computed, and these phi coefficients can theorectically be considered the upper bound for the validity of the placement procedures (See Appendix C for frequency tables.)

In case 2, the 20 ties were assigned to BE-01 to determine the relationship between the CET and the panel when a conservative approach to placements was employed; and in Case 3, the 20 ties were

assigned to EN-11 to determine the relationship between the CET and the panel when a liberal approach to the placements was employed (See Appendix C).

Table 6 shows that in Case 1 (20) ties removed from analysis the percentage of agreement was 76.5 for the total panel.

In Case 2 (ties in BE-01), the percentage of agreement was 71.4; and in Case 3, (ties in EN-11), the percentage of agreement was 67.5. This table also reveals that for the BES Department the percentage of agreement was 66.5 and for the English Department the percentage of agreement was 75.9.

TABLE 6

The Percentage of Agreement Between the Placements Given by the Six Reader/Judges and the Placements Given by the Cooperative English Tests

(N=203)

Judges	Cooperative English Test (CET)
1 BES	66.0%
2 BES	63.0%
3 BES	66.0%
4 English	70.4%
5 English	73.4%
6 English	72.4%
Panel from BES Dept. (N=3)	66.5%
Panel from English Dept. (N=3)	75.9%
Case 1: For Total Panel: with 20 ties removed from analysis	76.5%
Case 2: For Total Panel: with 20 ties placed in BE-01	71.4%
Case 3: For Total Panel with 20 ties placed in EN-11	67.5%

One of the directives given to the panel was to place the students in either EN-11 or BE-01 independently from the holistic score given the essay. Therefore, it is important to find out if this directive was adhered to.

In Tables 7 and 8 the phi coefficients computed between the placements made by the holistic scores, by the CET and by the independent judgment of the panel are reported for Case 1, Case 2 and Case 3. Table 8 reports the percentage of agreement between the holistic scores, the CET and the independent judgment of the panel for Case 1, Case 2 and Case 3. All of the phi coefficients are significant at the .05 level. This tends to disprove the idea that the placements made by the panel were independent of the holistic scores.

TABLE 7

Correlations between the Placements Made by Panel, Holistic Reading Method and the Cooperative English Test for the Three Cases

	Panel	Holistic	CET
CASE 1 (20 ties removed from analysis)			
Panel		.77*	.43*
HRM			.37*
CET			
CASE 2 (20 ties placed in BE-01)			
Panel		.65*	.40*
HRM			.40*
CET			
CASE 3 (20 ties placed in EN-11)			
Panel		.66*	.37*
HRM			.40*
CET			

* $p < .05$

TABLE 8

Percentage of Agreement Between

Panel, Holistic Reading Method and

Cooperative English Tests for the Three Cases

	Panel	Holistic	CET
CASE 1 (20 ties removed from analysis)			
Panel		80.4	71.0
HRM			68.7
CET			
CASE 2 (20 ties placed in BE-01)			
Panel		82.3	71.4
HRM			67.5
CET			
CASE 3 (20 ties placed in EN-11)			
Panel		80.4	72.2
HRM			67.5
CET			

If the mean for the holistic score for those students placed in EN-11 by the CET was 15.05 (using the sum of the holistic scores) and the mean for those students placed in BE-01 was 12.46, then it was arbitrarily set that a summative score of 14 was passing and the student was placed into EN-11 (See Table 9 for these figures). The overall conclusion that can be drawn is that the panel and holistic score usually gave the same percentage of agreement with the CET, but the panel of judges in all three cases was slightly higher. This tends to support the argument that the holistic score was used in the actual placement but the experience of the judges also played a role which seemed to add to the percentage of agreement.

TABLE 9

A Comparison Between the Holistic Scores for Students Placed in BE-01 and EN-11

Course Placement	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t
EN-11	146	15.05	3.50	
BE-01	41	12.46	2.72	4.99*

* $P < .01$

The Relationship Between HRM Scores of Students Placed in EN-11 and BE-01

The last problem raised by the study was, Did the CET distinguish between the students who were placed in EN-11 and BE-01? (See Objective 3) In Table 9, the results of a "t" test are reported. These data answer the above question in the affirmative; namely, that there is a significant difference between the holistic score for the students placed in EN-11 and those students placed in BE-01 ($t = 4.99$). The students placed in EN-11 have an holistic score of about 2.5 but the students placed in BE-01 have an holistic score of about 2.0. If this system of scoring were to be used again, these guide lines could be quite useful.

Summary of Results

Based upon the data collected and analyzed for this study, the following results occurred:

1. There was a significant relationship between the scores obtained on the essay scored by a panel of writing experts and the CET. For the Expression subtest, the correlation was .50; and for the Vocabulary subtest, the correlation was.48.
2. There was a significant relationship between all methods of placement; (1) the CET; (2) the Holistic Scores and (3) the independent judgment of readers. The holistic scores plus the experience of the panel members seems to be operating in the judgment of the readers.

3. There was a significant difference between the holistic scores of students placed into either EN-11 or BE-01 by the CET ($t = 4.99$)

Discussion

When weighing the results of all the statistical analyses, the evidence seems to suggest that the CET as used at QCC seems to be valid as an initial instrument in placing students in a remedial writing course (BE-01). In support of this positive conclusion all of the correlations but one, between the individual judges and the Expression and Vocabulary subtests were statistically significant at the .05 level. Scores of both the BES panel and the English panel yielded significant correlation coefficients with both subtests ($p < .05$).

It can also be concluded from all of the above data, that the currently used QCC placement system when compared to the placement decisions of a panel of writing experts, differentiated significantly between those students who needed remediation and those students who did not. However, when considering that the percent of disagreement in placement between the total panel of reader/judges and the CET ranged from 23.5% to 32.5% (See tables C-9 through C-11), it is most important to retain the currently used safeguards built into the placement procedure.

It is presently a routine procedure in both BE-01 and EN-11 to assign students the task of writing an essay on the first day of class. Based on the quality of this essay, the student

may have his placement in BE-01 waived. Conversely, if the student passed the placement test and was placed in EN-11, the student may be transferred out of EN-11 and placed into BE-01. Special committees from both the BES and the English Departments review all essays which indicate the need for a change in placement and both committees must approve any waiver for BE-01 or any transfer from English 11 to BE-01. The results of this study support the continuation of this practice.

Future Studies

1. In order to have more confidence in the results of this study it is necessary for a future study to provide an independent verification. It is important to know whether similar results would occur with six different panel members. The same 204 essays could be used in another study with different faculty members from QCC as well as other institutions. The 204 essays used in the present study could serve as the dependent variable for any future cross-validation studies.
2. Since the students are placed in a remedial course by their performance on the CET it seems logical that exiting from a remedial course should depend upon criterion performance. The results of this study cannot be extended to assume a relationship between the CET Placement scores and scores on essays written at the end of the semester.

Therefore, a future study should investigate the further validation of the QCC placement procedure by comparing the posttest CET scores, with essays written at the end of the semester which are scored by a panel of writing experts.

3. Reliability studies on the QCC population should be conducted to determine whether the CET subtests of Expression and Vocabulary are stable and have internal consistency for QCC students.
4. Further studies should be conducted to determine the construct and predictive validity of the CET placement procedure for the QCC population.
5. Another objective method for scoring essays in addition to the HRM should be considered when replicating this study.

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APPENDIX A : Essay Instructions for Students

OFFICE OF TESTING, EVALUATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

PLACEMENT ESSAY EXAMINATION

Name (please print)_____

Social Security No._____

Age (to nearest birthday)_____

Sex: Male Female

High School:_____City_____State_____

Curriculum_____

This test is part of the placement test procedure at Queensborough Community College.

Please write an essay on the following topic:

Is New York City a Dying City?

Time limit: 50 minutes (no one will be permitted to leave before the time is up)

Length: As much as you need to cover the subject.

APPENDIX B

Pairwise Comparisons Among Reader/Judges Showing Frequencies and Percents of Placements, and Percent of Agreement in Placements (Percents are in Parentheses)

(Appendix B-1) Judge 1 vs Judge 2

		Judge 2 EN-11	Judge 2 BE-01	Total	
Judge 1	EN-11	74 (36.3)	35 (17.2)	109 (53.4)	% of Agreement = 65.2
	BE-01	36 (17.6)	59 (28.9)	95 (46.6)	
	Total	110 (53.9)	94 (46.1)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-2) Judge 1 vs Judge 3

		Judge 3 EN - 11	Judge 3 BE-01	Total	
Judge 1	EN-11	86 (42.2)	23 (11.3)	109 (53.4)	
	BE-01	35 (17.2)	60 (29.4)	95 (46.6)	% of Agreement - 71.6
	Total	121 (59.3)	83 (40.7)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-3) Judge 1 vs Judge 4

		Judge 4 EN-11	Judge 4 BE-01	Total	
Judge 1	EN-11	90 (44.1)	19 (9.3)	109 (53.4)	
	BE-01	35 (17.2)	60 (29.4)	95 (46.6)	% of Agreement = 73.5
	Total	125 (61.3)	79 (38.7)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-4) Judge 1 vs Judge 5

		Judge 5 EN-11	Judge 5 BE-01	Total	
Judge 1	EN-11	99 (48.5)	10 (4.9)	109 (53.4)	
	BE-01	30 (14.7)	65 (31.9)	95 (46.6)	% of Agreement = 80.4
	Total	129 (63.2)	75 (36.8)	204 (100%)	

APPENDIX B (continued)

(Appendix B-5) Judge 1 vs. Judge 6

		Judge 6 EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	90 (44.1)	19 (9.3)	109 (53.4)	
Judge 1	BE-01	38 (1.86)	57 (27.9)	95 (46.6)	% of Agreement = 72.0
	Total	128 (62.7)	76 (37.3)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-6) Judge 2 vs Judge 3

		Judge 3 EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	85 (41.7)	25 (12.3)	110 (53.9)	
Judge 2	BE-01	36 (17.6)	58 (28.4)	83 (40.7)	% of Agreement = 70.1
	Total	121 (59.3)	83 (40.7)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-7) Judge 2 vs. Judge 4

		Judge 4 EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	90 (44.1)	20 (9.8)	110 (53.9)	
Judge 2	BE-01	35 (17.2)	59 (28.9)	94 (46.1)	% of Agreement = 73.0
	Total	125 (61.3)	79 (38.7)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-8) Judge 2 vs Judge 5

		Judge 5 EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	97 (47.5)	13 (6.4)	110 (53.9)	
Judge 2	BE-01	32 (15.7)	62 (30.4)	94 (46.1)	% of Agreement = 77.9
	Total	129 (63.2)	75 (36.8)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-9) Judge 2 vs Judge 6

		Judge 6 EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	97 (47.5)	13 (6.4)	110 (53.9)	
Judge 2	BE-01	31 (15.2)	63 (30.9)	94 (46.1)	% of Agreement = 78.4
	Total	128 (62.7)	76 (37.3)	204 (100%)	

APPENDIX B (continued)

(Appendix B-10) Judge 3 vs Judge 4

		Judge 4 EN-11	Judge 4 BE-01	Total	
Judge 3	EN-11	93 (45.6)	28 (13.7)	121 (59.3)	
	BE-01	32 (15.7)	51 (25.0)	83 (40.7)	% of Agreement =70.6
	Total	125 (61.3)	79 (38.7)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-11) Judge 3 vs Judge 5

		Judge 5 EN-11	Judge 5 BE-01	Total	
Judge 3	EN-11	100 (49.1)	21 (10.3)	121 (59.3)	
	BE-01	29 (14.2)	54 (26.5)	83 (40.7)	% of Agreement = 76.5
	Total	129 (63.2)	75 (36.8)	204 (100%)	

Appendix B-12) Judge 3 vs Judge 6

		Judge 6 EN-11	Judge 6 BE-01	Total	
Judge 3	EN-11	93 (45.6)	28 (13.7)	121 (59.3)	
	BE-01	35 (17.2)	48 (23.5)	83 (.7)	% of Agreement = 69.1
	Total	128 (62.7)	76 (37.3)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-13) Judge 4 vs Judge 5

		Judge 5 EN-11	Judge 5 BE-01	Total	
Judge 4	EN-11	105 (51.5)	20 (9.8)	125 (61.3)	
	BE-01	24 (11.8)	55 (27.0)	79 (38.7)	% of Agreement = 78.5
	Total	129 (63.2)	75 (36.8)	204 (100%)	

(Appendix B-14) Judge 4 vs Judge 6

		Judge 6 EN-11	Judge 6 BE-01	Total	
Judge 4	EN-11	102 (50.0)	23 (11.3)	125 (61.3)	
	BE-01	26 (12.7)	53 (26.0)	79 (38.7)	% of Agreement = 76.0
	Total	128 (62.7)	76 (37.3)	204 (100%)	

APPENDIX B (continued)

(Appendix B-15) Judge 5 vs Judge 6

		Judge 6			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
Judge 5	EN-11	110 (53.9)	19 (9.3)	129 (63.2)	
	BE-01	18 (8.8)	57 (27.9)	75 (36.8)	% of Agreement = 81.9
	Total	128 (62.7)	76 (37.3)	204 (100%)	

APPENDIX C

Pairwise Comparisons of Placements Among Reader/Judges and the Cooperative English Test (N=203) Showing Frequency, Percents and Percent of Agreement

(Appendix C-1) CET vs Judge 1

		CET EN-11	CET BE-01	Total	
Judge 1	EN-11	93 (45.8)	16 (17.9)	109 (53.7)	
	BE-01	53 (26.1)	41 (20.2)	94 (46.3)	% of Agreement = 66.0
	Total	146 (72.0)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-2) CET vs Judge 2

		CET EN-11	CET BE-01	Total	
Judge 2	EN-11	89 (43.8)	18 (8.9)	107 (52.7)	
	BE-01	57 (28.1)	39 (19.2)	96 (47.3)	% of Agreement = 63.0
	Total	146 (72.0)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-3) CET vs Judge 3

		CET EN-11	CET BE-01	Total	
Judge 3	EN-11	99 (48.8)	22 (10.8)	121 (59.6)	
	BE-01	47 (23.2)	35 (17.2)	82 (40.4)	% of Agreement = 66.0
	Total	146 (72.0)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-4) CET vs Judge 4

		CET EN-11	CET BE-01	Total	
Judge 4	EN-11	106 (52.2)	20 (9.9)	126 (62.1)	
	BE-01	40 (19.7)	37 (18.2)	77 (37.9)	% of Agreement = 70.4
	Total	146 (71.9)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

APPENDIX C (continued)

(Appendix C-5) CET vs Judge 5

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	110 (54.2)	18 (8.9)	128 (63.1)	
Judge 5	BE-01	36 (17.7)	39 (19.2)	75 (36.9)	% of Agreement = 73.4
	Total	146 (72.0)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-6) CET vs Judge 6

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	109 (53.7)	19 (9.4)	128 (63.1)	
Judge 6	BE-01	37 (18.2)	38 (18.7)	75 (36.9)	% of Agreement = 72.4
	Total	146 (71.9)	75 (36.9)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-7) CET vs BES Judges

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
3 Basic	EN-11	98 (48.3)	20 (9.9)	118 (58.1)	
Skills	BE-01	48 (23.6)	37 (18.2)	85 (41.9)	% of Agreement = 66.5
Judges	Total	146 (71.9)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-8) CET vs English Judges

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
3	EN-11	113 (55.7)	16 (7.9)	129 (63.5)	
English	BE-01	33 (16.3)	41 (2.02)	74 (36.5)	% of Agreement = 75.9
Judges	Total	146 (71.9)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-9) CET vs Total Panel: Case One with ties removed

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	103 (56.3)	16 (8.7)	119 (65)	
Total	BE-01	27 (14.8)	37 (20.2)	64 (35)	% of Agreement = 76.5
Panel	Total	130 (71.0)	53 (29.0)	183 (100%)	

APPENDIX C (continued)

(Appendix C-10) CET vs Total Panel; Case Two with ties placed in BE-01

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	103 (50.7)	15 (7.4)	118 (58.1)	
Total	BE-01	43 (21.2)	42 (20.7)	85 (41.9)	% of Agreement = 71.4
Panel	Total	146 (71.9)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

(Appendix C-11) CET vs Total Panel; Case Three with ties placed in EN-11

		CET			
		EN-11	BE-01	Total	
	EN-11	114 (56.2)	34 (16.7)	148 (72.9)	
Total	BE-01	32 (15.8)	23 (11.3)	55 (27.1)	% of Agreement = 67.5
Panel	Total	146 (71.9)	57 (28.1)	203 (100%)	

APPENDIX D:

QCC Catalog (1973-1974) Description of BE-01 and English 11

BE-01 COMPOSITION WORKSHOP

3 class hours 0 credits Additional conference time required

For students with special writing problems who need intensified instruction, as determined by a standard placement test and screening results. Paragraph and essay composition and preparation of reports stressed, with emphasis on organization, thought development, and grammar. Successful completion of this course will satisfy, on the recommendation of the instructor, the requirement for entrance into EN-11, HI-11, BI-140 (formerly 10), BI-201 (formerly 11), BI-301 (formerly 13), and all basic language courses. Students enrolled in BE-01 may take AR-11, 12, 15, *or* 16 concurrently.

*EN-11 ENGLISH COMPOSITION I

3 class hours Themes and conferences required 3 credits

Prerequisite: BE-01, or satisfactory score on the English placement examinations.

Basic principles of clear and effective written expression; library work; frequent themes, discussed at individual conferences with the teacher.

APPENDIX E

Research Objectives of the Office of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Research to Evaluate Remedial Instruction at QCC

1. To determine whether remedial instruction does, in fact, remove the academic deficiencies of students (A study of Remedial Reading Courses (BE-03) Offered During the Fall, 1972 Semester: A Baseline for Longitudinal Studies, Queensborough Community College, City University of New York, 1973).
2. To determine whether the QCC procedures using the Cooperative English and Mathematics Tests published by ETS validly identifies students who need English and/or Mathematics remediation (the thrust of the present study).
3. To determine whether QCC students who show academic deficiencies and then successfully complete remedial courses in writing, reading and/or math do better in credit bearing courses than students who show academic deficiencies and do not complete remedial courses.

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